

# Engineering Contest

## Pöttinger Innovation Contest

“Innovations are indispensable for agricultural engineering companies and hence an essential part for the sustainable success of the company.”

KLAUS PÖTTINGER, GESCHÄFTS-FÜHRENDER GESELLSCHAFTER DER ALOIS PÖTTINGER MASCHINENFABRIK GESMBH



-  **122 Ideas**
-  **574 Members**
-  **819 Comments**
-  **448 Evaluations**
-  **3,407 Visitors from 82 countries**

Demand for food and agricultural goods is continuously rising due to the growing world population. Contrastingly, the development of acreage is declining. Thus, it is important to use remaining resources more wisely. This also leads to new requirements for the agricultural machinery. Pöttinger has recognized these complex problems, and thus, aims at facing the challenge of increasing efficiency while being more sustainable. The company is a medium-sized family business from Upper Austria running in the fourth generation. Pöttinger has more than 140 years of experience in the field of agricultural machinery. Today, the family business employs 1,370 people, and annual sales amount to 282 million Euro.

### The Challenge – Optimising the Cutting Process

The development of new agricultural machinery is rather complex and requires the expertise of experienced engineers. In order to enrich this development process with new perspectives, Pöttinger searched for creative and innovative approaches.

Among others, one challenge Pöttinger’s engineers are currently facing is improving the uniformity of the cut grass within the

cutting unit of the in-house haulage vehicle. Better alignment of the haulms facilitates a more consistent cut of the animal feed. Optimizing the fermentation process in turn improves the quality of the animal feed. Better quality of the feed increases the milk production of the cows, eventually leading to better results for the farmers who are the customers of Pöttinger.

### The Solution – An Open-Innovation Platform

Following suggestions from the University of Applied Sciences of Upper Austria, Pöttinger decided to actively engage in innovation activities. HYVE, known for its vast expertise in open innovation, was entrusted to provide consulting on the open innovation project as well as the development of a concept to realize the project. Based on extensive

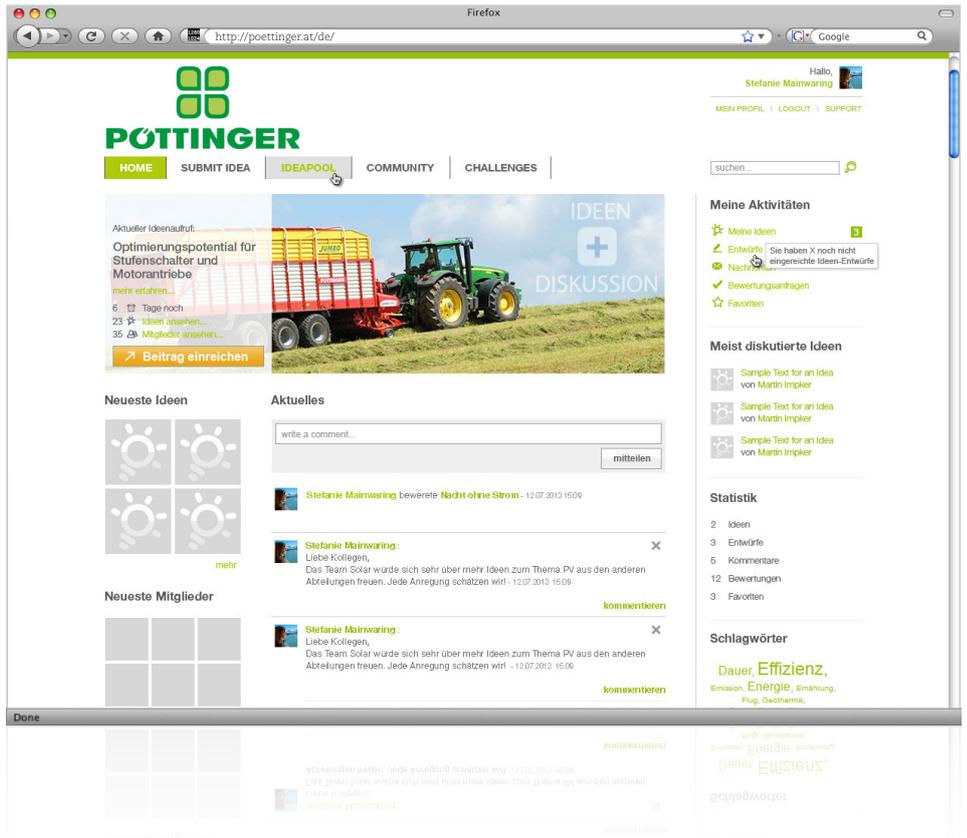
research and analysis, a contest platform especially addressed to mechanical engineers, designers, farmers, and students of relevant disciplines was developed. Throughout the contest period, 574 people registered on the platform and submitted a total of 112 ideas. Encouraged by the continuous feedback from the experts, the users generated



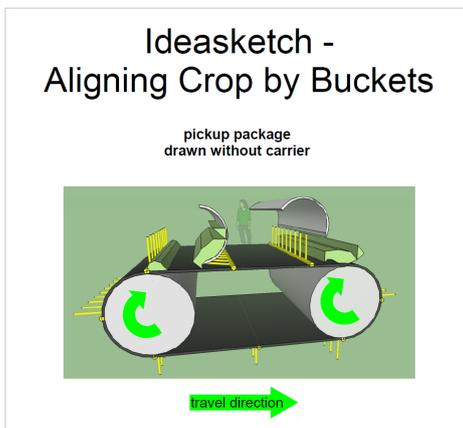
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819 comments and 571 evaluations of the ideas. Through elaborated discussions multifaceted suggestions for improvement have been developed.

The success of the contest can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, Pöttinger tried to explain the complex issue as simple as possible and to visualize it with the help of a video. This allowed even non-experts to participate in the contest, and increased the heterogeneity of the contest community. Secondly, close cooperation was established between the expert team consisting of engineers from Pöttinger and the community members. Expert comments, which helped participants to improve their ideas, were strongly appreciated. The concrete need for solving a complex problem constituted another success factor. Finally, intensive communication and discussion within the community encouraged the participants to rework and improve their submissions.



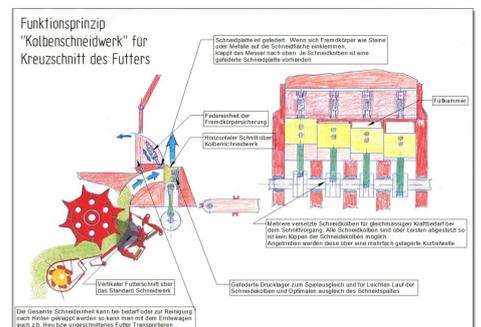
## The Success – More than 100 Potential Solutions



1<sup>st</sup> place: "Aligning crop by buckets" von Gisela Fuchs



Winners of the contest



Special price for Stefan Edtbauers "functional principle piston cutting" for the cross-section of the chuck

The jury, which consisted of executive managers from Pöttinger and university professors, was very positively surprised by the large number of high-quality submissions. The competition did not only appeal to locals, but attracted the attention of many international people as well. Another success was the cooperation between Pöttinger and the University of Applied Sciences of Upper Austria. A very committed student trainee working at Pöttinger supported the execution of the contest as part of her master thesis.

Based on intensive discussions among the jury members, the three most promising ideas were each awarded a prize yielding a total

value of 8,000 Euro. The idea "aligning crop by buckets" from Gisela Fuchs won the first prize. The jury praised her idea as being simple to realize while adding value to the current harvesting process. Fuchs also differentiated her idea by providing a very detailed elaboration. The second prize was awarded to Peter Pölzleitner and his idea "vibrating pick-up conveyor crop alignment". His idea differed from others by suggesting a very innovative approach, i.e. the support of the current Pöttinger system with a high process velocity. Florian Tautscher won the third prize. He persuaded the jury by developing several 3D models to visualize his idea. At last, there has also

been a special award, worth 1,000 Euro, for an idea which did not provide any solution in the usual sense, but suggested to approach the problem in a completely different way.

Given the elaboration and professionalism of the submitted ideas, Pöttinger teamed up with a master student from the TH Deggen-dorf to develop further the three winning ideas. A complete analysis as well as a patent research was conducted for each idea. Currently, the company is working on prototypes of the ideas. Recently, Pöttinger even visited Linz Textil to share best innovation practices and report about its successful open innovation project/approach.